



Welcome to Deaf Services Commission of Iowa



"Equal Communication, Education, and Access"

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COMMISSIONER'S UPDATES



Dr. James Grover

Hello. I am honored to be on my second term now as a commissioner with DSCI. I have enjoyed learning and growing into this role, and working with such committed, interesting people on the Commission. We commissioners

are from so many different backgrounds and interests, that I think we are each able to contribute something different to DSCI based on our knowledge and experience.

My interest and focus is on employment of persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH). I am currently a Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor with the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Service (IVRS), where I have served for the last nine years to help persons with disabilities go to work in areas of interest. But my entire professional life has been in service to D/HH in some way.

My background is very diverse. I was born and raised in Urbandale, Iowa, but left home at 17 to join the Marine Corps during our conflict with Viet Nam. When I finished my service and began college at a small school in Arkansas, I read an article stating that the Arkansas School for the Deaf in Little Rock needed teachers for the Deaf, and I very eagerly began to prepare myself to teach in the field. I didn't know about Vocational Rehabilitation at the time, but during my senior year in college, I looked for another elective course and finally selected one entitled "Introduction to Rehabilitation." I quickly felt deeply drawn to their philosophy of "Give me a fish, I eat for a day; but teach me to fish, I eat for a lifetime." It changed my entire vocational direction.

I graduated from Arkansas State University, took a few graduate courses in counseling, audiology and speech pathology, then transferred to the University of Arizona for a masters degree in Rehabilitation Counseling of the Deaf (RCD). For eight years I worked as an RCD at a state Rehabilitation Center in Kansas, then moved to Minnesota to manage a regional Deaf services program where we taught, consulted and promoted better services to D/HH.

I served here for eight years, then went on to get my doctorate (Ph.D.) in Rehabilitation Research and Education from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR. My dissertation was a study of vocational interests in congenitally Deaf people who had attended the Arkansas School for the Deaf. I'd asked the question of whether vocational interests crystallized in persons who are Deaf, from childhood to adulthood. It took two and half years of full-time work to complete my program, but I finally graduated in 1998.

Now my greatest concern as a DSCI Commissioner and IVRS Supervisor is that D/HH find employment that meets their financial needs and interests--and employment that is as high up as they wish to go. I want to eliminate or reduce any barriers, and provide any supports that will help with this goal. I always want to know if D/HH in Iowa are working at jobs they enjoy, jobs that challenge them to grow and get better, and jobs that pay well enough to support them and their families? The mission of IVRS is to work for and with persons with disabilities, including the D/HH, to help them achieve their employment, independence and economic goals. If you have a concern or question about employment policies or barriers, your DSCI commissioner or staff could direct you to an answer. And we would appreciate your opinion or suggestion. If you are unemployed, or feel you are underemployed, you should contact your area IVRS office.

I look forward to serving you as a DSCI Commissioner.



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